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VI.—THE FIRST ODE OF HORACE.

Some years ago the writer made a somewhat careful analysis of the Odes of Horace, chiefly for use in his own classroom. The purpose of the classification was purely practical, *i. e.*, to arrange the Odes in a limited number of easily recognizable and namable groups, in order to assist the young student in grasping the meaning of the individual Odes, each as a whole. The classification is not precisely logical, and a few more topics might have been admitted (*e. g.*, War, Dramatic Lyrics, Allegorical, Early Roman History, Legend, and Custom). But for the particular purpose in hand brevity was desirable, and the list as constituted seemed to cover, substantially, the contents of all the Odes. It is as follows:

- I. Patriotic and National, including praise of Augustus.
- II. Religious, including hymns and prayers to the gods.
- III. Philosophical and Gnomie, especially Ethical, including "the golden mean" and the doctrine of contentment.
- IV. Wine and Conviviality, including *carpe diem*.
- V. Love Poems, including attacks on women.
- VI. Bucolic or Idyllic (in a broad sense, requiring some special definition).
- VII. Mythological Tales (a very small group, but definite and specific).
- VIII. The Glory and Power of Poetry.
- IX. Personal Addresses; Poems of Friendship (this group also requires some special definition).
- X. Praise of Places (like Group VII, a very small group, but definite and specific).
- XI. Occasional Pieces of the Poet's own Life and Experience, including prologues and epilogues (also requires a little special definition).

This old classification was recalled to the writer's mind by an article by Professor Martin that appeared comparatively recently in *Classical Philology* (April, 1918), entitled *Remarks on the First Ode of Horace*.

The object of the article referred to—to use one of its writer's own phrases in alluding to the interpretations of the First Ode by other scholars—is to get at “the point and purpose of its composition.” This he does by likening the Ode to “a cause of the *genus deliberativum*, perhaps, in which vss. 1, 2 are the *exordium*, vss. 3-34 the *probatio*, and vss. 35, 36 the *peroratio*,” and he analyzes, outlines, and comments upon the poem on this basis. It is not necessary here to go further into the details of the article, but attention is called to another and perhaps simpler way of looking at the poem in the light of the present writer's analysis of the contents of all the Odes, to which reference has just been made.

As an immediate preliminary to this possibly “simpler” way of dealing with Ode i, it may be said that there is no necessary or essential quarrel between Professor Martin and the present writer—at least not throughout. They are simply not working in quite the same way and to the same end. The former is working mainly beneath the surface, to get at the subtle, inner meaning and implication of the words; the latter is seeking first of all to account for and analyze the material that goes into each Ode taken primarily in its surface meaning, though not disregarding inner meanings and implications ultimately. For example, with regard to the First Ode as a whole and its general purpose, Professor Martin says: “the purpose, . . . , of the poem is not to defend the poet's calling, . . . , nor yet to dedicate the first three books of odes, . . . , but simply to express the hope that he may be regarded as the lyric poet of Rome corresponding to Alcaeus among the Greeks and to that end bespeak the sympathy of Maecenas,” which all rests upon detailed special interpretation. The present writer, on the other hand, with no opposition to this except to the statement that the purpose is not “to dedicate the first three books of odes” (which perhaps the writer of it did not mean, as he was writing of the purpose “in the sense of outstanding thought”), starts out simply from the generally obvious facts that the poem is a dedication of and introduction to the following series, and then seeks to analyze the contents, primarily in their plain surface meaning, under several pre-defined heads—to which others would be added, if they anywhere appeared as essential. It is assumed that the alleged facts are “obvious” from (1) the address to Maecenas

at the beginning and again, without the latter here being named, at the end, (2) from the position of the Ode at the beginning of the collection—alongside of the similar addressing of **Mæcenas** at the beginning of the Epodes, the Satires, and the Epistles—, and (3) from the general character of the surface contents of the piece.

To repeat in part, it should be noted in what follows that the detailed facts brought out came out quite naturally and inevitably, without being sought for to support any particular interpretation of the Ode as a whole, in the course of an analysis made primarily simply to see what material—material taken as it comes and primarily in its plain surface meaning, with no search for subtleties—the Ode contained. This fact adds to the interest, if not to the convincingness, of the results.

That Horace is a careful and painstaking writer is known to all. He tells us so himself, and it is obvious on every page of every department of his writings. Each word is chosen with care; the writer's *curiosa felicitas* (which means careful choosing and the ability to choose the one apt and right word) was noticed from the first; his connections, except where they are deliberately abrupt, as they sometimes are (perhaps especially in the Satires), are carefully and nicely made. Each Ode is a polished gem. Now the First Ode, as remarked just above, was evidently written as an introduction to the collection, and its material (the opening and closing addresses to **Mæcenas**, intended to serve as a dedication, quite possibly added after the rest of the Ode was completed, as was long since pointed out; and the theme of the wide variety of the tastes and ambitions of men, intended to serve the purpose of emphasizing the distinction of Horace's ambition from those of other men) was admirably chosen to serve this purpose.

But is this quite all? The allusion to wars and camps (23-25) at least suggests the theme of patriotism. There are slight touches of religion in allusions to the gods (6 and 30). The general theme of the variety of tastes (3-34) may be regarded as gnomic or philosophical. There is a touch of wine and conviviality (the man who does not disdain to take a part from the solid day with cups of old Massic; 19-22). There are also touches of love and the country (the tender wife, 26; the green arbutus tree and the springs of holy water, 21 f.; the cool groves

and the dancing of the nymphs and the satyrs, 30 f.; etc.). The last few lines touch on the glory of poetry. By reason of its address to *Mæcenas* the piece goes into group 9 as defined above. And the poem is an "occasional" one, as that term has been defined.

Now can this be accidental? These several topics or characteristics make up nine of the eleven that constitute the complete list given above for the contents of the Odes; the only ones that are not represented are those of the two very small and special groups, 7 (mythological tales) and 10 (praise of places); there are no other plain surface topics introduced in the piece except as or in mere illustrations; and no other single Ode contains quite so wide a range of material according to the specified style and standard of analysis. Does it not look, then, very much as if Horace, having finished the collection of three books of Odes, sat down to compose, with care and pains, combined—perhaps as an afterthought—with a dedication to *Mæcenas*, an introduction that should really introduce the collection by indicating to the careful reader not merely the poet's general aim and purpose in writing, but in considerable detail the precise field covered? One cannot be certain, of course, but it is either design or a curious and remarkable chance.

J. W. D. INGERSOLL.

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